

Pam

Missy pers.

The
Missionary
Candidate

BY

J. HUDSON TAYLOR

NOV 10 1956

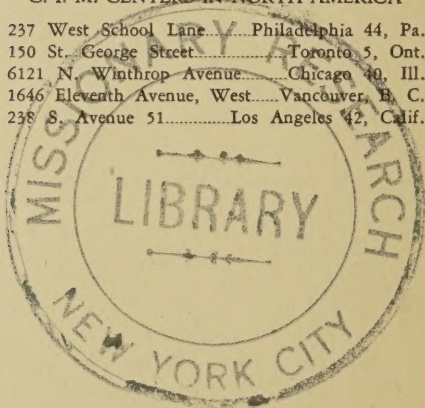
China Inland Mission

¶ The China Inland Mission was organized in 1865, in obedience to the command of our Lord (Matthew 28:19) and constrained by the love of Christ and the hope of His coming, to penetrate and occupy China's INLAND provinces, with the aim of giving the Gospel to every creature and building up a self-supporting Chinese church.

¶ The Mission is interdenominational, international, evangelistic; it stands for the inspiration and authority of the Bible, and soundness in the faith for all members; it does not go into debt, gives no guaranteed income to missionaries, and is supported solely by free-will offerings. Its work is reported in "China's Millions" monthly. Copies free on request.

C. I. M. CENTERS IN NORTH AMERICA

237 West School Lane.....Philadelphia 44, Pa.
150 St. George Street.....Toronto 5, Ont.
6121 N. Winthrop Avenue.....Chicago 40, Ill.
1646 Eleventh Avenue, West.....Vancouver, B. C.
238 S. Avenue 51.....Los Angeles 42, Calif.



The *Missionary Candidate*

By J. Hudson Taylor, 1832-1905

IN THE broadest sense of the word every Christian should be a missionary. Christ has redeemed us that we should be "Witnesses unto him," and should "show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Of all His redeemed He says, "As thou has sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." The sphere of service may be large or small, at home or abroad; the called may be old or young, sick or well; but the principle remains the same. We are left down here to be witnesses unto Him; and to bear witness always, wherever we may be, is alike our privilege and our duty.

But in a more restricted sense, there are some who are called to leave their secular vocations and to give up their whole lives to missionary work. Such are our ministers, evangelists, and missionaries at home, as well as abroad—for the field is the world. In this paper, however, we shall only consider the case of those called to foreign work, who are to labor in China in one or another department of missionary enterprise.

Even then our subject is a broad one; for China needs, not only ordained missionaries

as pastors and teachers, but many others, who may or may not be ordained, for literary and educational work, for medical missions, for evangelistic and itinerant work, besides others for colportage, printing business, etc. The women of China need the Gospel as well as the men, and lady workers of varied qualifications are needed, and, beyond dispute, have proved themselves most useful. To consider the special requirements of each of these classes in detail would need more time than can now be given; but it requires no proving that to ignore all these differences, and to expect all to pass through the same preparation would be a mischievous mistake. No one expects every minister to give five years to the study of medicine; to require every evangelist to take a full theological course is not more wise. China is perishing. Our plans must be sufficiently comprehensive to make room for all whom God shall call, sufficiently elastic to be adapted to them all; and yet sufficiently guarded to exclude the unsuitable, however learned, wealthy, or otherwise attractive they may be.

The same broad principles apply to all missionaries for China, and these we may now consider. Many of them apply equally to workers in other lands, such as the call, the character, and to a large extent even the qualifications and training for service.

I. *The Call of God.* It will be admitted by all that a missionary needs to be called of God; but widely different views exist with reference to the call, while many have not any clear view at all. A missionary who is not clear on this point will at times be almost at the mercy of the great Enemy. When difficulties arise, when in danger or sickness, he will be tempted to raise the question which should have been settled before he left his native land: Am I not in my wrong place? There are, therefore, few questions more important than the following:

1. How is a man to judge for himself that he has the call of God to devote his life to missionary service?

The operations of the Spirit of God are exceedingly varied. In some cases there is a deep inward sense of vocation, in others this is absent. In many cases there is a great longing for the spiritual enlightenment of the heathen and desire to engage in it, but at times there is as great a shrinking from it. It is no more safe to build on mere inward feelings (though these may be of great value) in the matter of the divine call than it would be to build on such feelings as a ground for assurance of salvation. The only safe ground in either case is the Word of God. For salvation, all are called, but few are chosen; for few heed the call and obey it. For service, every child of God is called,

but many heed not the call; and many who do, are so placed as to health, family, circumstances, etc., as to be free to consider home work only. Others, however, recognize God's call in the command, "Go ye," and find that no insuperable difficulties prevent them from leaving their previous vocations. As intelligent servants, knowing there are many witnesses at home and few, indeed, abroad, they have good grounds for believing that God would have them offer themselves for foreign service. They have fair health, have proved for themselves the power of Christ to conquer the love and power of sin, and have no claims upon them which preclude their going wherever the Lord may have need of workers. Indeed, they feel the call so strongly that conscience could not rest were they not to offer themselves to God for the needy heathen. Now in this call there is first the command of the Word, then the calm judgment of the intelligence, the conscious desire to obey, and to follow the example of the Lord Jesus. Not their own, they will go, if sent, as His servants. They know the service will be arduous, will often be painful, and perhaps apparently discouraging; but they will obey the call nevertheless. This is very different from mere feeling. That might change, but the call would remain. Many have a great desire, who are never permitted to enter the mission field. Some who go on the strength

of feelings afterwards regret their mistake. Mere pity for the spiritual and temporal miseries of the heathen is not sufficient. God's command, brought home to the heart and conscience, God's love, the constraining power, and the God-given facilities which make foreign service possible, are considerations of the highest moment, and, taken together, are not likely to mislead.

As soon as a young Christian at home recognizes a call to work for the Lord, some Christian service should be commenced at once, and carried on diligently and perseveringly. This is not less important in the case of those who look for ultimate service abroad, but rather more so. Thus they will test the reality of the call, and also prove and develop their own powers. A voyage across the ocean will not make anyone a missionary or a soul-winner. While proving and developing their gifts at home, such preparation for future service as may be practicable should be carried on at the same time; and suitable steps taken to open the door to the foreign field, with much prayer that the Lord will open or shut, as, and when, He sees best. If the call be indeed of God, He will open the way; and till He does so, the one called may patiently and calmly wait. A worker is not responsible for anything out of his power. Effort and energy and perseverance are required of him; success will come in God's own time.

2. But how are others to determine whether those who think themselves called—and who probably are called to offer themselves—should be accepted? It was well that David wished to build the temple; but it was not God's will that he should do so, though he was permitted to help in the work to no small extent. The plan was given to him, the means were largely given to him, he was used to urge Solomon to do the building; and, besides giving largely of his own means for it, he was successful in stimulating his people to great liberality towards the work. So now, some may be led to offer who are unsuitable for the work in the field; and yet, they may have the burden laid upon them, in order that, David-like, they may be helpers and givers. But to return to the question, Who shall be accepted? speaking generally, we may say, those of suitable age, character, and qualifications, and who have already proved themselves patient and successful workers at home. God gives ability for the department of work to which He calls His servants, and our question is simply this, Is there evidence of ability for work in China? Even on this point great care and much prayerfulness are needed. One of the most successful missionaries I have met in China was repeatedly rejected by examining boards, and not without reason. But he persevered, God opened the way, and most successful work

he did for six or seven years, from which he was called to his reward. We may now consider:

II. *The Personal Character of the Missionary for China.* I need scarcely say that he should be unmistakably saved and thoroughly consecrated to God, living a holy, consistent life. It is equally desirable that he should have shown himself useful and helpful, and that in some measure at least his character should have already influenced and impressed others. But beyond this, a missionary should be unselfish, considerate of, and attentive to, the feelings and needs of others. He should be patient—not apathetic, but able to bear opposition calmly and with long-suffering; he should be persevering also, not easily discouraged. With all this, energy—well under control—is needed, and power to influence and to lead. I must not omit to mention one most important characteristic of a successful missionary — absence of pride of race; for nothing so much repels those for whom we labor, and “the Lord resisteth the proud.” Power to come down to the level of those he seeks to save, and to become one with them, is most important. It is only in so far as he can do this that he will make them one with him. “The Word was made flesh”; Christ was born “under the law”; it became Him to be made in all things like unto His brethren—how much more does it

become us! He was the "wisdom of God" as well as the "power of God"; and He has left us an example that we should tread in His steps.

III. *Qualifications for Service.* But besides his own personal character, certain qualifications for service—physical, mental, and spiritual—are needed. I will consider first the lowest of these, because even it will close the door to many whom we might gladly welcome among us.

1. *Physical Qualifications.* These should be equal to the requirements of the part of China in which the missionary is to labor. The nervous system should be able to bear the strain of acclimatization, of study, and of any nature of isolation the work may call for. A fairly good digestive power is needed; and good muscular strength is not only valuable in itself, but as tending to keep the whole system in health by its exercise. The body is the Lord's; and, while not pampered, it should be well cared for, for Him.

Men of melancholy temperament, who cannot throw off the depression they are subject to; the fastidious, who are often more or less dyspeptic; and the highly excitable are risky candidates for work in China.

In the case of lady missionaries, a fairly healthy and vigorous frame is very desirable. Some may marry sooner or later, and if

unable to maintain health in the various circumstances of married life, not only will their own work be hindered, or come to an end, but the work of the husband may suffer, or he may have to leave the field. After considerable experience, we strongly urge the great desirability of ladies acquiring the language and becoming acclimatized before marriage, wherever this is possible. Ladies of highly excitable or hysterical temperament are not well adapted to this climate.

2. Mental Qualifications. The mind should be thoroughly sound, and there should be no taint of hereditary insanity, or China is not unlikely to develop it. A sound judgment, everywhere valuable, is specially so in China; and the ready tact which takes in the situation and makes the best of it is never out of place here. The absence of these qualifications may neutralize the best intentions and the most earnest efforts.

Evidence of capacity should always be sought for. Culture is very valuable, if linked with capacity; but there are some who, while they have done well in the schools, seem to have exhausted their small stock of capacity. Such would be of little use in China. A candidate should have ability to learn and to become whatever may be necessary. If some advantages of education have been lacking, we may remember that missionary study and work are themselves educational; and if there is the re-

quisite ability, very useful service may yet be rendered.

Attractiveness and Leadership. Some persons possess a power to attract and influence which is difficult to explain, but is a gift of the highest value when used by the Holy Ghost. Such persons are generally fond of children, and are loved and trusted by them. The instinct of children does not often mislead them, and those who can work well with and for children will generally make good missionaries. The power of leadership is seen in some in a marked degree, and is most valuable. Where these gifts are wholly absent, or the reverse of them is present, these negative indications should be duly considered before applying as a candidate for China.

3. Spiritual Qualifications. These, of course, are supremely important. Imperfect physical health or mental furnishings are not absolutely fatal to success, but a true missionary must be a man of spiritual power. The work to be done is a spiritual work, the foes to be worsted are spiritual foes. Let no one think that when he has looked at the hoary civilization of China, the difficult language, the mighty power of numbers, the prejudice of race, the materialistic outlook of the Chinese mind, and the hindrances caused by opium and unfriendly contact with foreigners, he has surveyed the principal difficulties with which we have to con-

tend! No! Our warfare is not with these merely: we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in heavenly places, who reign in the hearts of the heathen. Enlighten their minds, affect their conscience even, and they will remain the same, unless the Father draw them, unless the Son set them free, unless the Spirit convict them of sin and renew their hearts. And this work God will usually do through those who are spiritual. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come" (John 16:13)—come where?—come to whom? "unto you" (v. 7)—what will He do? He, indwelling in the believer, "will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (v. 8). And, moreover, He it is who "will guide you into all truth" (v. 13). Above all things, therefore, must the missionary be spiritually minded.

How important it is, then, that candidates be well-equipped spiritually! They must be holy men, loving the Word, feeding and feasting on it, having it dwelling in them richly; must be men of prayer, who have often proved for themselves its power; men who wish to live for eternity and are resolved to do so; men under "the powers of the world to come," to whom unseen things are most real and most satisfying. They must be men who have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts—not merely men who love God or who know that He loves them; but who have the very love of God for

perishing souls shed abroad in their hearts, and who hence can do in their measure what Christ did in His, and by the same power. That love, that passion for souls, knows no repulse, never fails—is fertile in expedient, patient in difficulty, and successful in issue—for it is of God and by His power. Oh, for such men — for multitudes of them! However noble or however humble, men so qualified are the great need of China. And, oh, my dear brethren, may we have a fresh anointing, and drink afresh, and more deeply than ever of the water of life; so that from each one of us—poor, empty vessels though we are—rivers of living water may flow to bless this thirsty land of China!

IV. *Training.* It only remains very briefly to refer to the matter of training. God trains all His workers, but often in very different ways. There is no gift of God which is not improved by suitable training. The body, the mind, the heart and the soul all benefit by it. Are we not too apt to confine our thoughts of training to the intellect? And is not heart-training far more important, and yet far more neglected? Much of our training—by far the most important part of it—must be left in God's hand, and will often have been accomplished before the candidate makes application: the more largely this is the case, the more satisfactory the issue. Then comes the question

of when, where, and how such further training should be taken.

1. When? Age is a very important element; if the candidate is very young, or has been recently converted, training is specially indicated; but if already not young, and the deficiency is not of paramount importance, it may be unwise to detain one long at home for preparation.

2. Where? at home or in the field? If the training needed is for medical work, for literary work and translation of the Scriptures, or for educational work, much of it must be done at home. But wherever it is practicable, there is greater advantage in much of the training being done in China. The missionary can learn much while acquiring the language, while becoming acclimatized, and while learning to understand the minds of the people—quite as important a matter as understanding their language. It was in this way that Joshua was trained under Moses in the Old Testament times, and the disciples of Christ in the New. In this way Paul trained his companions, and no method is more effectual than this wherever it can be applied.

3. How? This must, of course, depend much on the object aimed at. I would say, however, that whether at home or in China, spiritual work should always be connected deepening of spiritual life should always be with secular; and heart-training and the

kept not merely in sight, but in the very front. Let us see to it that a deepening knowledge of the Word accompany whatever else may be thought desirable.

Finally, let us remember that God will go on with the training—that we have not to do it all: that the study of the language and literature of China is as good a mental training as that of Western classics; that travel and dealing with men and things are highly educational; and let us never forget that while we are training, men are dying, dying in hopeless sin. Let not our training practically impress us with the thought that we are the important agent and the Holy Spirit's work merely auxiliary; that our improvement is the urgent thing, and that the condition of the heathen is not so very urgent after all. Would that God would make hell so real that we could not rest, heaven so real that we must have men there, Christ so real that our supreme motive and aim shall be to make the Man of Sorrows the Man of Joy through the conversion of many of those concerning whom He prayed, "Father, I long that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."